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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 001157

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TAGS PGOV, PREL, SA, IR, SY, IZ

SUBJECT: TALABANI WELCOMES AMBASSADOR, DISCUSSES ARAB

SUMMIT, BAGHDAD SECURITY, DE-BA'ATH

Classified By: Ambassador Ryan Crocker per 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) SUMMARY: The Ambassador met with Iraqi President Jalal Talabani and Foreign Minister Hoshiyar Zebari March 31 to present his credentials

Welcome

12. (C) Talabani welcomed the Ambassador and expressed his conviction that he and Iraq are real friends of the U.S. He said Iraq and the U.

13. (C) The Ambassador told Talabani he was glad to be back in Iraq and praised Talabani's efforts to build a relationship with the U.S. He said

Arab Summit

14. (C) Talabani said he "explained everything" in his speech to the Arab League. He spoke of the liberation of Iraq and how Coalition troops w

15. (C) Talabani said in his side meeting with Amr Mousa, Secretary General of the Arab League, he criticized the

SIPDIS exclusion of crimes and terrorism taking place in Iraq in the Secretary General's report, to which Mousa responded that he

SIPDIS would add it. He said he also had private meetings with the kings of Jordan and Saudi Arabia and with Turkish PM Erdogan, whom he invite

16. (C) He also spoke with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad in Riyadh and asked him why they had seen no results from their agreement to cooper

BSP and Sunni Participation

17. (C) According to Talabani, the Baghdad security initiative has been successfully implemented in a way that

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targets not just Sunni areas, but all parts of the city. He said even Iran was cooperating in some ways by directing the Sadrist Jaysh al-Mahdi

18. (C) He said the situation was much better than a few months ago, referencing the PM's involvement of the Sunnis in the security plan. Talab

19. (C) He said before his illness he had a discussion with the PM on steps to reach out to Sunni parties within the GOI. They agreed on the r

Reconciliation/De-Ba'athification

110. (C) Talabani said they are continuing their efforts for national reconciliation and told the Ambassador that the people are forming groups

111. (C) The Ambassador thanked Talabani for his critical role in reconciliation efforts and inquired on the status of the draft de-Ba'athifica

British Detainees

112. (C) Talabani said he wrote a letter to the president of Iran which called for the release of the British sailors. In it, he told the Irani

113. (C) Comment: Talabani appeared tired and seemed to have more difficulty than usual speaking English. His staff, probably concerned for his